



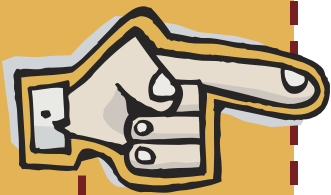
Our
GOAL!

FUNdraising

by Lissa Carlson &
Michelle Kemper Brownlow

Soup labels, grocery receipts, and milk caps, oh, my! Heard it all before, right? We think outside of the “box tops” and offer you some new ideas for raising your fun—oops, we mean “fund” - level!

While some of these distinctive ideas may take some extra planning, others fall into the “painless” category, and all can really “pay off” in the end.



Host a community-building night at a local restaurant and collect a percentage of the profits.

Once we started exploring this idea, we were amazed how many restaurants in the Coulee Region offer this option. Raise some extra dough (no pun intended) and have a pizza or fast-food night fundraiser (think Chuck E. Cheese's, Burger King, Domino's, etc.). A portion (usually 10–20 percent) of the profits from sales on your designated evening will go directly to your organization. Just pick a night and often the restaurant will produce flyers for you. No expense to you; it's inexpensive publicity for the restaurants. It's a win-win situation.

Take in a movie.

Marcus Theatres Corporation offers an easy program that earns your qualified group up to 15 percent of the profits. Order your fundraising kit, take orders for Marcus Theatres VIP tickets or Marcus Corp. gift certificates, and deliver movie theater fun. Call (800) 274-0099, ext. 2 or visit marcustheatres.com/fundraising.

Search for funds.

Next time you do an online search, do it through GoodSearch.com and a penny goes to your nonprofit organization of choice. You must add your charity or school first, and then use the search engine, powered by Yahoo, to rack up contributions. Get parents, teachers, students, and relatives searching on your behalf and watch the pennies multiply.

Check coats.

Sure, you might find some spare change in that old coat pocket, but we mean a coat check fundraiser. Seek out events and places that could use this service, particularly around the holidays, and you'll be clapping all the way to the bank. Make arrangements with retail outlets, malls, or events for both coat racks and an area to have your coat check. Shoppers can check their coats and packages for a fee or donation. This idea brings the opportunity to make hundreds of dollars in a single weekend. Rolls of tickets are your only expense unless you can get them donated.

Recycle AND contribute.

Take the idea of saving labels one step further at TerraCycle.net, where you not only "find great uses for objects that used to be considered waste," but also raise funds for your charity of choice at 2 to 6 cents per container. Yogurt containers, soda bottles, cookie wrappers, and drink pouches are just some of the products you can turn in. Shipping is free. TerraCycle then produces and packages products entirely using the waste you send them.

A picture's worth... 50 percent cash back!

Raise funds for your sports team or school with a portrait fundraiser through Picateers.com. A local volunteer photographer takes the photos, requiring a suggested two volunteers per 150 kids. With no upfront costs, parents can preview portraits online before buying. In addition to photos, parents can purchase fun photo gifts, ID cards, yearbook CDs, and other items. Picateers returns 50 percent of the sales to your organization, with profits of more than \$10 per child.

Start a business.

Let students learn safely and creatively about owning their own business, with the profits benefiting their school or organization. Students and parents or teachers can purchase a "franchise-like" business from [FranChild](http://FranChild.com). Choose from a beeswax candle, handmade organic soap, organic apparel, or jewelry company. A \$25 fee includes support in the form of business cards, marketing and selling advice, customizing software for packaging products, less-than-wholesale pricing on materials, and access to an online community of other owners. In addition to learning business basics, students learn about manufacturing, marketing, packaging, branding, private labeling, sales, and money management. Check out FranChild.com.

Host an online auction.

A new spin on the ever popular silent auction, this idea increases the pool of bidders beyond the scope of the traditional events that usually host these auctions. MissionFish.org is sponsored by eBay. Check out BiddingForGood.com, powered by Cmarket.com, for another

online option and some really great items that allow you to “shop virtuously.” Be prepared to heavily promote your virtual event for the best success rate.


Skate right along.

A skate-a-thon has the added benefit of getting kids moving for a cause. Whether it's ice or roller skating, check with your rink of choice for details. Ice arenas may donate skate rental for your cause while you collect pledges. High Roller Skating Center in La Crosse offers “Healthy Families” school fundraisers. Make arrangements with the center to have a portion of the admissions donated back to your school on your event date. See HighRollerSkatingCenter.com for details.

Shop for a cause.

With the holidays just around the corner, take advantage of gift shopping with an online site that donates a percentage back to you. SchoolPop.com specifically serves schools, but there are many other sites, such as igive.com, set up for any nonprofit organization. It's a great way to involve out-of-town friends and relatives in your efforts to raise funds.

Grow your funds with flowers.

Come spring, put “Flower Power” to work for your organization. Encourage gardening with this healthy, earth-friendly program from Dutch Gardens. Buyers benefit from free shipping when they order from you and you benefit from 50 percent of the profits. Visit FlowerPowerFundraising.com. 

Lissa Carlson is editor and publisher of Coulee Parenting Connection. She recently added fundraising chair to her duties when no one else at her son's school wanted the job.

Michelle Kemper Brownlow lives in Morgantown, Pa., with her family. She writes about motherhood on her blog, My Semblance of Sanity, and recently created a website for families dealing with pediatric cancer at its4thekids.blogspot.com.



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